



# Northern Great Plains Network

## Inventory and Monitoring Monthly Report

January 2003



**Northern Great Plains Network Annual Meeting:** I hope you all found the annual I&M Meeting productive; I know I did. As always, I thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend. And remember, this is your program so please take ownership; that will become even more true as we transition into the monitoring (a.k.a., Vital Signs) phase. The remainder of this newsletter will consist of decisions made at the meeting, an abbreviated version of the meeting minutes, and a participant list. (Should any of you want a copy of the Powerpoint presentations please let me know.)

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### IMPORTANT DECISIONS MADE AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

- Bill Supernaugh, Andy Banta, and Ruthann Knudson were selected to serve on our Board of Directors, with Bill being the Chair. The decision was made in part on geography and in part on getting large and small parks represented. I will begin working with them immediately to develop a charter that needs to be reviewed and signed by all 13 parks.
- Several parks expressed an interest in conducting park-specific Vital Signs scoping sessions as soon as possible. I will attempt to rearrange my priorities so I can conduct such sessions at Badlands NP, Wind Cave NP, and other interested parks this summer.
- We will amend the bird, mammal, and herp inventory agreements so the Principle Investigators will populate the "Species Information" fields in NPSpecies. Specifically, the projects will be increased by \$8,125, \$4,600, and \$1,500 respectively.
- We will hire a student to continue the herbarium search at the University of South Dakota (i.e., the work started by Sandee Dingman). Expected cost is \$5,000.
- We will provide \$10,000 to the Badlands NP rare plant study to supplement the work to be conducted there this summer.
- We will conduct plant inventories this summer at Fort Laramie NHS and Fort Union Trading Post NHS. Plant inventories at Mount Rushmore NMEM and Jewel Cave NM will be deferred until 2004 (assuming they are still necessary).

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### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

- Dennis Jorde introduced Dr. Amy Symstead and described the nature of her position and his expectations for her. He said Amy's primary duty is to assist National Park units in this region. She is expected to conduct scientific research that can be published; however, 20-30% of her time could be spent on technical assistance issues. USGS-BRD will cover her salary, but other expenses should be covered by the parks

(e.g., equipment, field technicians). Amy is to be the USGS-BRD ambassador to parks in the Northern Great Plains. Amy thanked parks for their assistance in identifying plant related research projects for the Service Comprehensive Call.

- Dr. Phyllis Adams discussed the status of the I&M Program at the national level. She said we should prepare to receive \$150k in “Vital Signs” startup money this fiscal year. She said that having an established Board of Directors and an approved charter was a prerequisite to receive such money.
- Bill Supernaugh gave an update on the proposed Learning Center at Badlands NP. The park is still pursuing the use of a nearby hotel as a Learning Center.
- Dr. Gary Willson gave an update on the CESU. The CESU web page now has detailed instructions on how to initiate projects. He is making progress on the “expert” database (i.e., a list of experts by subject matter).
- Dan Licht gave an update on the 12 basic inventory datasets, with special emphasis on the biological inventories and work conducted in FY02 (contact Dan for detailed information on the work conducted in FY02).
- Arvind Panjabi gave an update on the bird inventories conducted in 2002. Arvind noted that several parks have especially rich bird diversity or relatively high densities. Further information can be found in the bird inventory annual report.
- Dr. Cheryl Schmidt gave an update on the mammal inventories conducted in 2002. Dr. Schmidt also noted that several parks have especially species diversity or relatively high densities. The mammal work in 2002 focused on small non-flying mammals. In 2003 the mammal work will focus on bats and mid- and large-size species. She would like to defer the Missouri NRR work until 2004. Further information can be found in the mammal inventory annual report.
- Dr. Brian Smith reported on the herpetofauna work conducted in 2002. Brian described the difficulties in herp work because of their low numbers and hard detectability. He mentioned that the 2002 work was also compromised by drought. He stressed that it would be really helpful if park staff could identify species and/or get photographs. Additional information can be found in his annual report.
- Chad Prosser and Taryn Flesjer gave an update on the Exotic Plant Management Team.
- A discussion occurred on the 2002 field inventories. Everything seemed to agree that the Principle Investigators were doing a good job and that the data being collected was excellent. The few incidents that were reported were there were communication problems. The parks requested that the PIs work closely with them prior to their arrival on timing and proposed field activities.
- Dan Licht discussed the status of the Forest Service building and the current status of office space at Mount Rushmore NMEM. Don Hart stated that the park had no imminent need for the office space. Dan stated that they would most likely grow out of the existing Mount Rushmore space in the near future. Dan described some considerations for a permanent site and asked parks to consider whether they would be interested in hosting the program. Dan stated that the Inventory phase of the program had been paying administrative support to the host park and he expected the Monitoring phase would do likely if they were at a park. Linda Stoll stated that Dave Given would sign a letter in support of moving into the proposed Forest Service

building or one of their existing buildings. Dan stated he would attempt to draft such a letter.

- Dan Licht asked if any parks had someone in mind who could assist the Inventory program in data entry. Sandee Dingman had someone in mind.
- Dan Licht stated that bird permit applications slipped through the cracks in 2002 and that he would be applying for such permits in 2003.
- Dr. Phyllis Adams briefly described the need for a Board of Directors and what they typically are comprised of. A discussion ensued about who should be on the original Northern Great Plains Network BOD. After input by all Superintendents present it was decided that Bill Supernaugh, Ruthann Knudson, and Andy Banta would serve on the BOD. They would immediately start working with Dan Licht to draft a charter.

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#### ATTENDEES (at least those who signed in or I recall being there)

Dan Licht  
Valerie Naylor  
Marie Curtin  
Bill Koncerack  
Audrey Barnhart  
Dennis Jorde  
Amy Symstadt  
Sandy Dingman  
Jim Cheatham  
Gary Willson  
Phyllis Adams  
Bill Supernaugh  
Dan Roddy  
John Moeykens  
Barbara Shaw

Cheryl Schmidt  
Andy Banta  
Marc Ohms  
Lisa Eckert  
Doug Albertson  
Rod Skalsky  
Carmen Blausey  
Ted Benson  
Barb Muenchau  
Paul Hedren  
Deb Qualey  
Brian Smith  
Don Hart  
Arvind Panjabi  
Linda Stoll

Eddie Childers  
Linda Williams  
Ruthann Knudson  
Wayne Werkmeister  
Chad Prosser  
Greg Shenbeck  
Dan Uresk  
Taryn Flesjer  
Dave Pohlman  
Steve Hirtzel  
Andy Thorstensen  
Cody Wienk  
Mark Rumble  
Dan Foster